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JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Conf. calls young people to evangelize

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The 1,800 Mississippi Baptist young people attending the 2001 Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC) December 27-28 in A.E. Wood Coliseum on the campus of Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton were urged to "Take the Torch" of Christian evangelism to their peers and to the world.

"I was really pleased with the conference. The theme was 'Take the Torch,' and I believe the speakers challenged our young people to do just that and to honor God with their lives," said Don Lum, chairman of the planning committee for the conference and a consultant in the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson.

Speakers included Jon Gillis, vocational evangelist and member of Cleary Church, Florence; John Avant, pastor of New Hope Church in Fayetteville, Ga. (metro Atlanta); and Thomas Young, vocational evangelist from Houston, Tex.

Music was provided by music evangelist Chris Davis of Alabaster, Ala. Entertainment was provided by Dennis Lee of Dallas.

"Many of the students present were led to evaluate themselves and their personal commitment to spreading the Gos-

pel. There were 32 public decisions for Christ, and 21 of those were professions of faith," said Lum.

A new format was also introduced for the conference's breakout sessions in which participants were divided by school grade and not by the region of the state in which they live, as was the practice before the 2001 conference.

Gillis, Avant, and Young led the breakout sessions on the MC campus and across the street at First Church, Clinton.

"The adult sponsors who accompanied the young people to the conference seemed to be more pleased with the new format than the old one," Lum said.

Lum expressed appreciation for Jay Fletcher, minister to students at First Church, Clinton, and Wade Walton, youth intern at the church, for coordinating the church's participation in the breakout sessions.

"We utilized both the old and new sanctuaries at First Church, Clinton. We couldn't have conducted the breakout sessions without the church's facilities," he said.

Lum also thanked Paul Sumrall of Marble Slab Creamery and Dan Cathey of Chick-Fil-A for donating supplies that were used as illustrations by the speakers, and Darrell Henderson of Middle Cross Productions of Jackson.



HELLO! — Christian entertainer Dennis Lee of Dallas performs with one of his puppets at the 2001 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference, held December 27-28 at Mississippi College in Clinton. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

In addition to Lum, the 2001 YEC planning committee included:

- ◆ Jay Albritton, minister to students at First Church, Vicksburg.
- ◆ Christy Anderson, minister to students at First Church, McComb.
- ◆ Todd Cole, minister to students at First Church, Terry.
- ◆ Don Gann, pastor of Wynndale Church, Terry.
- ◆ Shannon Slover, minister to students at Main Street Church, Hattiesburg.
- ◆ Clinton White, minister to students at Bayou View Church, Gulfport.
- ◆ Patsy Bozeman, ministry assistant in the MBCB Evangelism Department.

The 2002 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference is scheduled for December 30-31 in A.E. Wood Coliseum on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton.



GROUND ZERO MEMORY — John Avant, pastor of New Hope Church in Fayetteville, Ga., holds up a replica of an Olympic medal December 27 at the 2001 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference at Mississippi College in Clinton. The medal was pulled from the Ground Zero site of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Towers while Avant and other Georgia Baptists were in New York City providing chaplain and other services to emergency response personnel and victims. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

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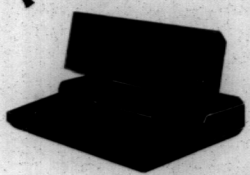
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Miss. CP sets record

The Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) closed the fiscal year on December 31 with record gifts to the Lord in the amount of \$29,826,248, according to Jim Albritton, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, which disburses the CP funds. The amount was less than one percent below the record of \$30,047,997 — also a record when it was approved by the 2000 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. December giving of \$1,750,000 was a record for giving in the same month last year. The CP budget for 2001 was \$29,826,248, a 74 percent increase over the 2000 budget of \$17,240,000. The CP has a long history of growth. In 1950, the CP budget was \$3,063,000. In 1960, it was \$11,111,941.14. In 1970, it was \$22,222,222. In 1980, it was \$33,333,333. In 1990, it was \$44,444,444. In 2000, it was \$55,555,555. In 2001, it was \$66,666,666. In 2002, it was \$77,777,777. In 2003, it was \$88,888,888. In 2004, it was \$99,999,999. In 2005, it was \$111,111,111. In 2006, it was \$122,222,222. In 2007, it was \$133,333,333. In 2008, it was \$144,444,444. In 2009, it was \$155,555,555. In 2010, it was \$166,666,666. In 2011, it was \$177,777,777. In 2012, it was \$188,888,888. In 2013, it was \$199,999,999. In 2014, it was \$210,101,010. In 2015, it was \$221,212,121. In 2016, it was \$232,323,232. In 2017, it was \$243,434,343. In 2018, it was \$254,545,454. In 2019, it was \$265,656,565. In 2020, it was \$276,767,676. In 2021, it was \$287,878,787. In 2022, it was \$298,989,898. In 2023, it was \$309,100,000. In 2024, it was \$320,211,111. In 2025, it was \$331,322,222. In 2026, it was \$342,433,333. In 2027, it was \$353,544,444. In 2028, it was \$364,655,555. In 2029, it was \$375,766,666. In 2030, it was \$386,877,777. In 2031, it was \$397,988,888. In 2032, it was \$409,100,000. In 2033, it was \$420,211,111. In 2034, it was \$431,322,222. In 2035, it was \$442,433,333. In 2036, it was \$453,544,444. 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Our changed world

Recently a pair of friends were engaged in a conversation about a well-publicized political event that occurred less than two years ago. Midway through the conversation one of them paused and said to the other, "You know, I realize that was important but since September 11 it seems as if it occurred a lifetime ago."

What we deem so important one day can be brought into a totally different perspective by the next day's events. The safety and security of our personal world can be swiftly transformed into a scary place.

Just ask a spouse whose life's love has just been diagnosed with cancer. All of a sudden, the leaky house and the kids' tuition and the broken-down car don't have quite the importance. It's as if those problems were a lifetime ago.

We've been hearing a lot lately about how September 11 changed us, how it brought back into clear focus the things that should be the most important to us. One of the most important items that should be in clearest focus now is fulfilling the monumental task left to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).

Nestled in the comfortable confines of our Southern Baptist way of life here in the buckle of the Bible Belt, we tend to forget that there's a lost world out there. Most all of our workmates are Christians. Most all of our children's schoolmates are Christians. Most all of our friends are Christians. Chances are that even the total stranger sitting next to us on a park bench is a Christian, if not a Southern Baptist.

All that familiarity can lead to a certain nonchalance — yea, smugness — on our part. Mississippi Baptists returning from volunteer duty around Ground Zero in New York City have a different view, however. They know that for many New Yorkers, an encounter with a Baptist volunteer in the weeks since September 11 was the first time they ever met a Christian.

That wouldn't startle most Mississippi Baptist pastors along the Gulf Coast, where

the massive influx of casinos has brought unchurched construction workers and casino employees from around the world in numbers beyond imagination.

Now is not the time to be complacent about our Christianity. We need to get busy winning the world to Jesus. For Christians, that should be the focal message of September 11.

Don't be deterred by all the homages to universalism we are enduring at present; those are mostly for political consumption. There are differences between the "great" religions of the world.

The fact remains that there is only one true God and only one true Son of God — Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The story is told of the two Christian missionaries in a Far East country. The first time they entered a distant village to witness to the lost, they were severely beaten, dragged to the edge of the village, and left for dead.

They crawled the long distance back to their homes, recuperated, and set out for the village again — and again they were beaten to the brink of death. Again they returned home to recuperate and again they started out for the distant village.

This time, the angry mob met them wielding machetes. With the missionaries' situation growing dimmer by the minute, the mob suddenly grew silent and parted to allow the village elder to pass.

"Twice you have been beaten and told not to come back," he said. "Yet you return each time, and you don't fear even the sharpened blades of our long knives. Tell me, who is this Jesus for whom you risk your lives?"



Within the span of a few months, the entire village was saved. Within a year, the Gospel was spreading throughout the country and spilling over into surrounding countries. Heaven is rejoicing in the thousands upon thousands of souls who have come to know Jesus through the perseverance of those two unnamed missionaries working in a largely forgotten corner of the world.

September 11 may have changed everything else, but it didn't change the timeless message of Jesus Christ. It was the same yesterday, is the same today, and will be the same tomorrow.

May we daily rededicate ourselves to taking that simple message to a lost world hungry for the truth.

GUEST OPINION:

When is enough, enough?

By Caby Byrne
Memphis

Irecently attended an associational meeting where the subject was the adoption of the (revised) Faith and Message. It appeared there was a need to have a standard and resource to deal with accepting new member churches and to discipline those who might get out of line.

Leaders in Missouri mirror our inability to work together. Accusations continue to fly with Texas Baptists. Future state convention presidents are posturing for greater control to carry out political agendas.

Word battles are going on between International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Missions leader Keith Parks concerning the status of missions today. Who were we? Who are we? Who do we propose to be?

Is it going to take another tragedy within the church like September 11 to bring us out of our self-serving confrontations with each other? Was the cross not enough of a tragedy to get our attention? One of the last things Jesus did was to pray for unity among those who sought to learn his ways. He stated that his followers would be charac-

terized by the love they manifest for each other and even with those who differed with them.

Jesus seemed more intent on righteousness and compassion than rules of purity, such as keeping the Sabbath, washing hands, touching unclean folks, and general association with the outcasts and poor.

Pentecost was a contrast with those who sought to build a tower to heaven centuries earlier. One sought to glorify their own ambitions and agenda, resulting in disunity and confusion. The other took their diversity and allowed the Spirit of God to bring understanding and community. The question haunts us as to which group we mirror today.

Why is it that more people are rallying around the flag

than the cross? Is the cross incapable of bringing the people of God to a unity of purpose?

People around the world are engaging in costly conflicts and civil wars, while terrorists create fear in the hearts and minds of the innocent both within the world and within the church. The words of Jesus, "fear not", sound empty when cast alongside the warfare of Baptists. All the creeds, statements, resolutions, eloquent preaching, and accusations only serve those who endorse religious terrorism within the family of God.

How much do we as the church reflect the bombing of people while sending little packages that say, "Pardon our destruction; we really love you?" In Vietnam we did our "body counts" to reflect how

we depersonalized the enemy. Today we talk of collateral damage to justify the "necessary deaths to achieve our goal." Sounds an awful lot like the way we have dealt with our conflicts within the church and how we have found people expendable when it was necessary to reach our goal.

When is enough, enough? "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves... and turn from their wicked ways... I will heal their land." What price are we willing to pay for healing? Do we have to get our licks in first? Humility is an awful price to pay when pride has held us captive. Do I remember something about Jesus saying "I have come to set the captives free," and "if I make you free you will be free as never before?"

Does Jesus hold the key to releasing us from denominational bondage and baggage that is dividing us? I believe he does, wants to, and will, but it all begins with our humility. Is it too great a price to pay?

Editor's note: Byrne is a former Baptist Student Union director in Mississippi.

SFC campaigns showing positive results

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — A total of 169 new churches have been formed and approximately 23,000 professions of faith have been recorded in four major U.S. cities during the first two years of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) Strategic Focus Cities (SFC) emphasis — but the short-term numbers offer only a glimpse of the long-term impact on Phoenix, Chicago, Las Vegas, and Boston.

Existing congregations have been energized, not only with new members but also a new passion for and experience with evangelism and ministry. Student evangelism has emerged as a high priority in both secondary school and college levels.

In areas where Southern Baptists once might have been largely unknown, churches are now finding much greater recognition and acceptance of churches and their message of hope through Christ.

"While we are grateful for the results that God has granted, the real significance of SFC will be seen eight to 10 years from now as we are able to view the impetus created by all that was prayed over and poured into a city," said Doug Metzger, director of NAMB's Strategic Focus Cities team.

"An initiative of this magnitude has created a huge learning curve and the beneficiaries will be the cities that we involve in the future. As has been said by one of our local leaders: 'The best is yet to come,'" he said.

"Our experience is showing that good churches can be in the same city, doing good ministry yet coming short of the 'best' in



BOSTON PLUNGE — Student volunteers give away hot chocolate outside a subway station during the "Boston Plunge," part the Hearts for Boston outreach effort in the city this year. (BP photo by Kristen Treadwell)

ministry," added NAMB President Robert E. Reccord.

"That springs from a strong prayer base where pastors are on their knees together and strategizing together. With a Kingdom vision, an evangelistic passion, and a multiplication mindset of church planting, the results are speaking for themselves," he said.

Strategic Focus Cities represents a commitment of volunteers and other resources by Southern Baptists across the country toward introducing people in the largest cities in the United States and Canada to Christ, and helping them grow in their faith through involvement in local churches.

Mississippi Baptists were involved in the Boston SFC through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Partnership Missions Department.

It was in Phoenix and Chicago where leaders pio-

neered some of the most effective strategies that have continued in other cities. Local-church events like Vacation Bible School and block parties were used in Phoenix as part of a unified metro-wide strategy, according to city coordinator Bill Agee.

"The entire process for us was one of cooperation and facilitation," he said. "We wanted every activity to be dovetailing into something else. That gives it a synergy that is often missing from individual, disconnected events." The result has been a renewed emphasis on cooperative prayer, excitement about planting healthy churches, and the strengthening of existing churches through the succession of evangelistic events.

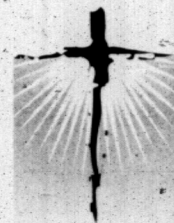
A total of 34 new churches were started and an estimated 10,000 professions of faith recorded as a result of SFC efforts. Churches in the Phoenix area that participated in the SFC effort have an average growth of about 20%, Agee said, and baptisms have set new records each year.

"SFC has allowed us to move very quickly to a level of

evangelism and soul-winning that might have taken us a decade to achieve," he said, noting that churches in 2001 have continued their efforts even without the same level of funding as 2000.

"The pattern is that through the SFC process churches learned how to fish and were given resources from all parties allowing them to flesh out their dream," Agee said. "The result is that these churches have grown dramatically and have reached out to reproduce many times over."

In Chicago, it was a combination of citywide events coupled with local church efforts that have made a lasting impact on the four participating associations. Prayer events, conferences, block parties, circuses, and even a citywide event on the shore of Lake Michigan resulted in nearly 7,000 professions of faith and 108 new churches.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

Record
THE BAPTIST

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"SFC catapulted Lake County five years in our church-planting strategy and ten years in our evangelism strategy," said Bob Ryan, director of missions for Lake Association.

Editor's note: For more on the ongoing SFC ministries, visit the respective Web sites on the Internet: www.phoenix2000.net, www.chicago2000.net, www.hearts4boston.com and www.lovinglv.org.

LifeWay best sellers

HARDBACK

1. Bringing Up Boys, Dr. James Dobson, Tyndale
2. Traveling Light, Max Lucado (Nelson)
3. Prayer of Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
4. Secrets of the Vine, Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
5. Night Light, Dr. James and Shirley Dobson, Multnomah
6. Praying God's Word, Beth Moore (B&H)
7. Prayer of Jesus, Ken Hemphill, B&H
8. Prayer of Jesus, Hank Hanegraaf (Nelson)
9. Spiritual Leadership, Henry & Richard Blackaby (B&H)
10. Life God Blesses, Jim Cymbala, Zondervan

PAPERBACK

1. Power of a Praying Wife, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House)
2. Power of a Praying Husband, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House)
3. Praying God's Will for Your Life, Stormie Omartian (Nelson)
4. Power of a Praying Parent, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House)
5. Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody Press)
6. Humor for a Woman's Heart, Various (Howard)
7. Case for Faith, Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
8. Harry Potter and the Bible, Richard Albanes (Christian Pub.)
9. Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs, Waterbrook
10. Sacred Romance, John Eldredge & Curtis Brent (Nelson)

Looking back

10 years ago

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, is the leading candidate to succeed Harold C. Bennett as president/treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, according to sources close to the search committee.

20 years ago

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn receive the annual Distinguished Service Awards from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. The awards are given for the Carters' outstanding contribution in Christian social ethics.

50 years ago

The Baptist Record and its editor, A. L. Goodrich, implore readers to bombard Washington by writing President Harry S. Truman and appropriate senators to protest the selection of Senator Mark W. Clark as ambassador to the Vatican in Rome.

NOBTS sets Saturday class pilot project

NEW ORLEANS, La. (Special) — New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) will offer three graduate-level Saturday classes for the Spring 2002 semester in a pilot project testing the need Saturday classes and a new model for delivery. The delivery model for each course will include four Saturdays of class meetings spread throughout the semester and the use of the "Course-in-a-Box" technology, which equips students for individual study through CD-ROMs, video, and written notes. The courses will be:

- Supervised Ministry 1, taught by Jim Cogdill on February 2, March 2, April 13, and May 4.
- History of Christianity 1, taught by Lloyd Harsch on February 16, March 9, April 20, and May 11.
- Pastoral Ministries, taught by Jerry Barlow on February 23, March 30, April 6, and April 27.

The classes will be located on campus in New Orleans and through Compressed Interactive Video (CIV) at NOBTS' extension center locations in North Georgia (Decatur, Ga.), and in Orlando, Graceville, and Jacksonville, Fla. For Southern Baptists, the courses will cost \$140.00 per semester hour plus a \$50.00 "Course-in-a-box" fee. The fees for these courses cannot be included in the tuition cap for semester fees.

Interested students may register for the classes on-line during the regular on-line registration, through the mail-in registration process, or on the first day of each class. For more information, contact the Extension Center Office at (800) 514-1175 or email at jdukes@nobts.edu.

Knocking on doors leading to professions

CLEARWATER, Fla. (BP) — Door-to-door soul winning works," claimed David Burton, director of the Evangelism Division of the Florida Baptist Convention, as more than 100 people converged on the streets of Clearwater as part of the Inner City Soulwinning (ICS) Seminar.

Burton, who led the event, said the teaching and witnessing was one of his most incredible experiences. Burton taught, witnessed and observed as veteran witnesses and novices led people to Jesus.

"One of the keys to ICS is the marriage of discipleship principles into the training which took place Friday and Saturday mornings prior to our going out on the streets," he said.

Burton reported that in about six hours 403 people made professions of faith. This was the first inner city evangelism seminar totally organized and funded by a Southern Baptist state convention.

The North American Mission Board has been leading similar national events, called Inter City Evangelism, or ICE, across America for nearly five years.

Walter Campbell, pastor of Bayview



DOOR-TO-DOOR — Charles Rutherford (left) observes Dale Griffith share a New Testament and the Gospel with a woman in Clearwater. Both men were part of the Inner City Soulwinning Seminar held in Clearwater at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church Nov. 16-18. (BP photo by Ron Mitchell)

Church in Clearwater and a participant in the three day event, offered an emotion-filled prayer of thanksgiving when he observed seven teenagers on a basketball court pray to accept Christ during the street witnessing.

He promised that his church would fol-

low up in person and begin discipling the teenagers who live near his church.

Guy Sanders, pastor of First Church in New Port Richey, brought members of his church to learn how to do street evangelism. He told his people earlier that he wanted to take them on a mission trip 25 miles from home.

Sanders brought 16 of his FAITH trained witnesses to partner with Mt. Carmel Church.

"My people were 'spiritually stretched,'" Sanders said of the experience. "There were well-educated folks, some grade school, some wealthy, some on welfare, senior adults and young people, male and female, healthy and handicapped. They experienced a stay-at-home journey to another culture to share Jesus and develop new Christian fellowship."

"Seeing churches work side by side to meet people where they are affirmed to

me that churches working together can accomplish so much more than one church can alone," said Cathy Lloyd, Suncoast Association Discipleship Director. "The key to the success of this event will be establishing small Bible studies and life groups where people can learn more about God."

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE "TUGLY"

I suppose one of the best things that can be said about the year 2001 is that it is finally gone! It ran out of days and has now been laid to rest in the unrepeatable pages of history. It is gone, but it is certainly not forgotten! It was a year like none other we have ever experienced. Every one of us has been challenged, changed, and constantly deeply concerned.

On September 11, 2001, and in its aftermath, we wondered what effect all of the world events would have on mission giving. Would our people be able to give? If not, what would our missionaries and ministries do without support?

To report on what happened, I would have to give it the title, "The Good, The Bad, and The Tugly." You have heard of "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly," but this is quite different. Let me share them with you.

The Good: The year 2001 was the first year that Mississippi Baptists have ever adopted a budgetary goal of over \$30 million dollars. That in itself was a significant increase that would call for faith and faithfulness under what we now know as normal conditions.

As the year progressed it looked like we would reach that significant milestone, but then September 11th hit and the ripple effect became immediate and enormous. The economy, that was already struggling, choked! Layoffs and elimination of jobs by the mil-



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

lions began to take place. The travel, hotel, and restaurant industries were stymied and every other business and industry was startled!

So what happened? God's people across Mississippi kept giving faithfully and regularly. The result was good, for when we closed the books on our year we were \$898,811 above last year's giving and 3.11% above last year.

The Bad: The downside of the picture is that we failed to reach our budget goal. We fell short \$221,749, which was a shortage of .74%. If you think back to the end of 2001, you will notice that the calendar was not helpful this year either. The last Sunday in December, a fifth Sunday, was 24 hours from the end of the year. This simply meant that churches that sent in their mission giving at the end of the month did not have time to get it in to our offices to be counted for the 2001 Budget.

The bad news is that we didn't make the budget, but we almost did!

The "Tugly": Probably, some of you think there is no such word as "tugly" and you are probably right. Yet, I would argue that you may be wrong.

If you will permit me I will invent the word, or at least interpret the word, because I believe that it is a part of Mississippi Baptist life. What is "tugly?" I believe it to be that wonderful kind of pull or tug in the hearts of Mississippi Baptists that causes them to give so graciously, sacrificially, and lovingly in spite of what is going on in the world. It is that tug from the Lord that says we are supposed to give.

Believers give not because they simply have discretionary funds, but because the Lord has instructed us in giving. There is a tug from Heaven for us to give, but that's not the only tug we feel. "Tugly" may refer also to the pull that we feel from our mission force.

Southern Baptists now have over 5,000 missionaries dispersed to the nations and people groups of the world telling of the love of Jesus. These are our spiritual, and in many cases, literal sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, who have heard the call of God and gone out on missions for him and for us. They are depending on our support. Regardless of terrorists or trials, we must not, would not, and could not, ignore our faith-

fulness to those folks who have gone out from us.

Finally, "tugly" for me refers to that pull that comes from a world in need of a loving, living Savior. With the passing of each year, 365 days, somewhere between 80 and 85 million new souls come to live with us here on planet Earth, and we have the good news that can make their lives different! Not only different for the here and now, but eternally different.

Not long ago I was in a city waiting for a man with whom I had an appointment. As I waited beside a building, I saw him drive up, park, and get out of his car. Then, instead of walking towards me, he walked on down the road 20 or 30 steps towards a man who was crippled, propped up against a building, and begging for money. The man with whom I had an appointment simply walked over, put some money in the beggar's cup, and then walked over and met me. His response was, "I don't have much, but I just can't pass up folks like that!"

There is a world that needs a Savior. There is a world that is hungry, crippled, blind, and wanting, and we have the answer! We cannot pass them up either. "Tugly" refers to the pull of the hearts of God's people to give when it's not easy — to do what the Lord has asked us to do in order to bless others.

Mississippi Baptists, I thank you for being great in the face of smallness and rising up to do good things in the face of bad. As we march into 2002, let us do even more for the glory of our Savior!

Pornographers hijacking Christian Web sites

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP) — Christian ministries are inadvertently becoming purveyors of smut as pornographers "hijack" expired Web sites, either to lure unsuspecting visitors to pornographic sites or to earn a profit by selling the URL back to its original owner at an inflated price.

The Indiana Baptist newspaper is among the latest victims of a scheme that has affected various ministries, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and political leaders.

Six months after the Indianapolis-based paper moved its content to a new state convention Web site, www.scbi.org, it gave up its rights to a former domain name. The day the old URL became available, pornography appeared on the old site.

Registered to a person supposedly in an obscure location in Russia, the bogus Baptist page now warns that it contains adult content and includes a note that the site is for sale.

Editor Chip Bayer said he considers it an indirect form of extortion, which the newspaper has decided to ignore. He said he consulted an attorney about possible legal action but learned it would be expensive and might not succeed.

"It has not caused as many problems as we would have

anticipated," said Bayer. He noted that when he told a public policy firm about the problem, a representative replied, "You're the second Christian group this has happened to this week."

Descriptive Web site names can be registered for only a small fee. When they aren't renewed, however, they become available first-come, first-served. With the growing influence of the Internet, domain names for promotional uses have become a hot commodity. Speculators can profit by registering desirable site names and then reselling them at an inflated price.

Internet pornographers, meanwhile, have long used innocuous-sounding URLs to

attract unsuspecting Web surfers who wouldn't otherwise log onto their site.

In this latest twist, Internet pornographers look for domain terms like "Baptist" or "Christian" in hopes that groups will be willing to buy back expired sites in order to get offensive material off them.

It becomes an even greater problem, because search engines will continue to point to old sites even after they no longer are used and infrequent visitors may have outdated URLs listed as favorite places in their own Web browsers.

"What Christian groups need to realize is they've become a target for pornographers," said Steve NeSmith,

who handles Internet content for LifeWay Christian Resources. "They offer content, knowing if they can get young people or someone to view their site for 30 to 60 seconds, they can hook them."

A recent story in the on-line Wired News said the International Lutheran Woman's Mission League, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Ohio State Senate, and municipalities from Kentucky and Iowa were among the victims of similar tactics.

So were a Christian legal organization and former Republican presidential hopeful Gary Bauer, according to Steve Watters, an Internet research analyst at Focus on the Family.

Congress passed legislation in 1998 to prevent just this kind of phenomenon, but a Samford University law professor said thus far there have been problems enforcing the Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act.

Thomas Berg, who teaches on constitutional law and intellectual property, said one problem is locating the culprit, such as the porn producer that reportedly operates from Armenia. Another is when someone abandons the site, it allows others to lay claim to it.

Indiana paper victimized

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — The Indiana Baptist newspaper has fallen victim to a so-called "extortion" attempt by an Internet pornographer who took over the paper's former web address. The official state paper of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana (SCBI) moved its online publication to the new state convention website, www.scbi.org. Six months later, the Indiana Baptist gave up its rights to its former domain name, www.indy-baptist.org. The day the former URL became available, pornographic material appeared on the old site. The Indiana Baptist reported that the pornographers agreed to sell back the domain name at a much higher price in "an attempt to extort money from the SCBI." Published reports indicate that other Christian ministries are falling prey to pornographers who take over expired websites hoping to lure cyber-visitors.

Group slams 'accidental' porn viewings

WASHINGTON (BP) — An obscenity watchdog group is concerned with the results of a recent study showing that 70% of teens surveyed have "accidentally" encountered porn on the Internet. "Clearly, there is a major failure in adult responsibility when almost three out of four teens report they have accidentally come across pornography on the Web," Morality in Media President Robert Peters said, "but the biggest failure of responsibility lies with federal and state prosecutors who turn a blind eye to obscenity on the Internet," he said.

The study, "Generation Rx.com: How Young People Use the Internet for Health Information," which was conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, also found that 57% of teens surveyed believe porn exposure would have a "serious impact on kids under 18." Forty-one percent said that exposure is "no big deal." Internet web site CNSNews.com reported on the study.

Birmingham church gives 'gift' to their home area

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — A crisp Sunday afternoon with unseasonably warm temperatures was the backdrop for a Christmas gift Dawson Memorial Church presented to the greater Birmingham, Ala., area.

Some 660 Dawson members shared the Gospel in three communities through "Joy to the World" evangelistic parties with free food, music, face painting, children's games, and a host of other activities.

"It was the church going beyond its walls," said Dawson pastor Gary Fenton. "What we did was to try and create the kind of ministry that we would give to each other and take it to a group of people who were not part of our church family."

One of the events was held just a few blocks from Dawson in the parking lot of Friendship Church, an African American church in the Rosedale area.

Friendship pastor Roosevelt Howard said there was "a spirit of oneness, of solidarity" at the event, which was attended by some 400 people — with 105 families taking advantage of the free family pictures offered. Among other activities, 44 people had their blood pressures checked.

Howard said he hopes the event will bring more area residents into church.

"What we did, we planted the seed," he said. "We are going to leave it up to the Lord now in this particular setting."

"Good results will come from it, but we won't know all of it for a while," Howard added. "Some of the people may wind up going to other churches. Even if our church doesn't grow a whole lot, as long as people are getting saved and growing spiritually, that is what is important."

Jennefer Tolbert, an active member of Dawson's single ministry, was among those involved with the party at the Elyton

Village Housing Community near Birmingham's Legion Field.

Dawson members helped children make cookies, coached them at the ring toss and other games, and helped with arts and crafts while the church's handbell choir played nearby.

Tolbert helped children make stars covered in glitter with Bible verses printed on the back. She said the event offered Dawson members a chance to share the love God has shown to them in their lives.

"Just the opportunity to give back something made it special," she said.

Tolbert said going into an area where homes had broken windows, doors that were boarded and other signs of neglect dispels the belief that urban decay exists only in larger cities.

"That's how much we take for granted the plight of people in our own backyard," Tolbert said. "We were so fortunate to be able to share God's love with them for a few hours."

How did the residents of the Elyton Community feel about the event?

"I felt an exuberance in the air," said Willine Body, president of the local community organization. "It was very good for the community."

"I knew that God's hand was in it," Body added. "I had a vision of what heaven is going to be like; we had all cultures, races and ages, and barriers were broken down."

The third event was held in the Sayre community some 25 miles northwest of Dawson. Two busloads of Dawson members pulled up in front of Middle Oak Tree, a church where services have been held in a tent since 1997 when Del Reid began as pastor there.

"Here you find people living on the

edge," Reid said. "A lot of people are primarily living on faith and they are receptive to the Holy Spirit. They are open about coming forward for prayer."

Reid said the efforts by Dawson members in providing entertainment, activities, food, and music were a blessing to his congregation and those living in the area. "There was a feeling of oneness with the other group from Dawson," he said.

"I don't know that we've ever done an event at Dawson that touched the spirit of this church like this did," Fenton said.



REACHING OUT — A member of Dawson Memorial Church (fourth from left) in Homewood registers youth at one of three evangelistic parties the church held in December as part of "Joy to the World." (BP photo)

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Ground breaking service at First Church, Oloh

First Church, Oloh, recently broke ground for its new sanctuary. In March 2001, the church was hit by a tornado, which destroyed the sanctuary. The church was established in 1902 and will celebrate its centennial next year. The building committee (pictured from left) are Mark King, Eddie Parker, Edd Chain, Kim Aultman, Paul Blackwell, Robert Brewer, Terri Bennett, and Gary Williamson.

Heaven's Gates & Hell's Flames will be held in the Rea Auditorium at Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Wesson, Jan. 13-16, at 7 p.m. The presentation will be sponsored by the BSU at the college; Mt. Zion Church, Brookhaven; and Wesson Church, Wesson.



Children of Hillcrest Church, Jackson, decorated bags and filled them with toys. These bags were distributed to children at the Stewpot Community Center in Jackson for Christmas.

Woodville Church, Woodville, recently held an RA recognition service. The Harvey Leake Chapter members received patches and pins according to their work accomplished. The RAs have participated in the hunger relief offering, the disaster relief fund, the Christmas shoebox ministry, and a medical supply ministry since September. Pictured (from left, first row) are August Siebert; Timothy Leake; Jared Townley; (second row) Dwight Williams; Lance Bourgeois; (third row) Joshua Townley; A. J. Krol; Robin Leake, leader; and (back row) Trey McCants.

The Nelons will be in concert Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. at Harmony Church, Crystal Springs. For more information or directions to the church, call (601) 892-1121 or (601) 847-4375.

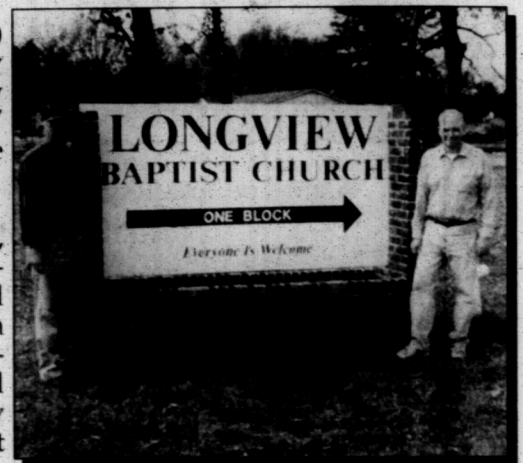
A GA recognition service was recently held at Woodville Church, Woodville. The girls were given charms and certificates for their particular grade level. They helped with the hunger relief offering by collecting aluminum cans with the RAs. Pictured (from left, front row) are Amanda Starns, Kristen Livingston, Marisa Siebert, Carly Mingee, Lauren



RAs of Woodville Church, Woodville

Cate Leake; (second row) Lauren Mingee, Lindsey Knighton, Courtney McGraw, and Desiree Krol. Leaders are Toni Kee and Tammy Ryan.

Longview Church, Starkville, recently erected a new sign. The old sign was destroyed when a car involved in an accident was unable to avoid hitting it. Pictured are Roy Sanders (left) and Bert Nail, deacons. Steve Huber is pastor.



Sanders and Nail



GAs of Woodville Church, Woodville

Congratulations

to
Rev. Lee Hudson
and

North Batesville Baptist Church

Batesville, Mississippi

On the Construction of their New Sanctuary

\$450,000

Construction Loan
and

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 10, 2002

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



First Contact/ Homebound Tour



January 21, 2002

Temple Baptist Church (West)

5220 Old Hwy. 11, Hattiesburg

January 22, 2002

First Baptist Church

1560 Popps Ferry, Biloxi

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

FIRST CONTACT

ministry is designed to provide an ongoing emphasis for outreach and ministry through the Preschool Sunday School division by:

- helping your church discover, locate, and minister to young adult prospects
- discovering expectant parents and families with babies up to 12 months of age
- making contacts (visits, telephone, and write) on a regular basis.

Contact Linda Reeves
Sunday School Department
601-292-3294 in Jackson
1-800-748-1651, Ext. 294

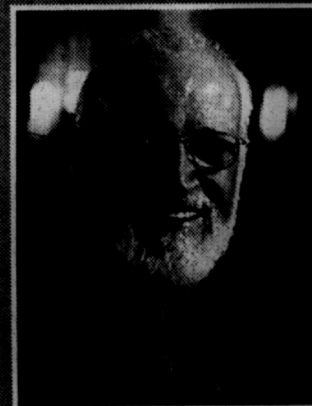
HOMEBOUND

ministry is a bridge between the Sunday School, your church, and people who cannot come to the church facilities.

- Who are homebound adults?
- How do I organize a homebound ministry?
- Where do I find homebound adults?
- How do I make a homebound visit?
- What resources are available for homebound ministry?
- What about ministry?

Contact Mark Lott
Sunday School Department
601-292-3295 in Jackson
1-800-748-1651, Ext. 295

2002 Baptist Doctrine Study Preview *Holiness*



- **Main Street Baptist Church**
Hattiesburg
January 28, 2002
- **McLaurin Heights Baptist Church**
Pearl
January 29, 2002
- **First Baptist Church**
Grenada
January 31, 2002



All
previews
are from
9 a.m.-noon

Preregistration
is requested.
The cost is \$10,
which
includes
brunch and a
copy of this
year's doctrinal
study
book, *Called
to be Holy*, by
Rick Melick.

For more information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 (Jackson).



Special Guest
Dennis Lee
'Nana Puddin'
Productions
Dallas

Family Week

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, July 1-5, 2002

Activities:

- Preschooler/Children - TeamKID; Teenagers - Mini Centrifuge with Harvey Ellis, Youth Consultant, MBCB

Adult Conferences:

- Single-Parenting - James Haynes, FBC, Biloxi
- Ways of God - Matt Buckles, MBCB
- Couples Conference - Ron and Karen Mumbower, FBC, Jackson
- Men's Conference - Ron Mumbower
- Women's Conference - Karen Mumbower

Family Week Favorites:

- Concert - *Ninth Hour*, Madison
- Bar-B-Que Cookout
- Whole Free Day
- Ice Cream and Watermelon Fellowships
- Night Swimming

A Unit: Adults (12 yrs. & up) \$172.75
Children (2 yrs. to 11 yrs.) \$86.63
C Unit: Adults (18 yrs. & up) \$154.75
Youth (12 yrs. to 17 yrs.) \$94.25
Children (2 yrs. to 11 yrs.) \$58.63

For more information, contact Glenn Shows in the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3373

Gulfshore Baptist A

Gulfshore Schedule 2002

May 13-16	I Senior Adult Conference (D&FM)	
May 20-22	II Senior Adult Conference (D&FM)	
May 23-25	III Senior Adult Conference (D&FM)	
May 25-27	Single Adult Conference (D&FM)	
May 27-31	I Youth Conference	} MBCB
May 31-June 4	II Youth Conference	
June 4-8	III Youth Conference	
June 8-12	IV Youth Conference	
June 13-17	V Youth Conference	
June 17-21	VI Youth Conference	
June 21-25	Young Musicians' Conference (CM)	
June 25-29	HeartSong '02 Youth Music Conference (CM)	
July 1-5	Family Enrichment Conference (D&FM)	
July 6-11	I Centrifuge (LCR/SBC)	
July 11-13	Music Leadership Conference (CM)	
July 13-18	II Centrifuge (LCR/SBC)	
July 18-20	Centri-Kid (SS and LCR/SBC)	
July 20-25	III Centrifuge (LCR/SBC)	
July 25-27	Growing Churches (D&FM)	
July 25-27	Church Media Library Conference (CS)	
July 27-Aug. 1	IV Centrifuge (LCR/SBC)	
Aug. 8-10	Pastors and Wives Conference (CAPM)	
Oct. 4-5	State Women's Retreat (WMU)	

For further information, contact Frank Simmons, 100 First Street,
Pass Christian, MS 39571-3299; phone 228-452-7261 or fax
228-452-7263.

* For Centrifuge information and reservations, call 877-CAMP-123 or write
CENTRIFUGE, P.O. Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37202.



Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer



Thank you Mississippi Baptists for 25
ing Gulfshore to be part of the lives o
and help us celebrate 25 years of min
Assembly during summer 2002.

Gulfshore is excited to announce tha
ence reservations early this year. Pos
February 1 for the best choice of con
dates.

**As our gift to thank you, Gulfshore
opportunity for your church to re
tion this summer!**

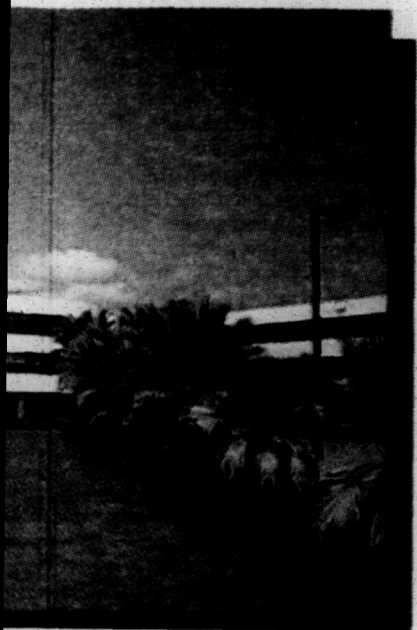
- Register during the month of F
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Centrifuge camps).
- Register 25 people or more for
- Check in on the day of your co
people.
- Receive ONE FREE REGISTRAT

For specific program information on
speakers & schedule), please contact
ment at the Mississippi Baptist Conve
Baptist Assembly is a Cooperative Pr
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
tive director-treasurer.

Assembly

Celebrating

25 years
of ministry



for 25 wonderful years of allow-
ives of your churches. Come
of ministry at Gulfshore Baptist

that we will be taking confer-
Postmark your deposit
of conferences and conference

shore is extending the
to receive one free registra-

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Convention Board. Gulfshore
ve Program ministry of the
Board. Jim Futral is the execu-

Summer 2002 Reservation Request

*In-state churches: Postmark February 1
Out-of-state churches: Postmark April 1 or later*

Amount of Deposit Enclosed _____
*Enclose \$40 deposit per person, age 2
and up, or \$80 per family unit.*

Conference Name and Date (1st Choice) _____

Conference Name and Date (2nd Choice) _____



FAMILY OR INDIVIDUAL REQUEST

Mr., Mrs., Miss _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

*(Attach extra sheet including names and ages of children
through 11 yrs.)*

ACCOMMODATIONS DESIRED:

☐ 2 per room ☐ 3-4 per room ☐ Efficiency



CHURCH GROUP REQUEST

Church _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Person _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

No. Males _____ No. Females _____

No. Couples _____ Total Reservations _____

*(Attach extra sheet including names and ages of children
through 11 yrs.)*

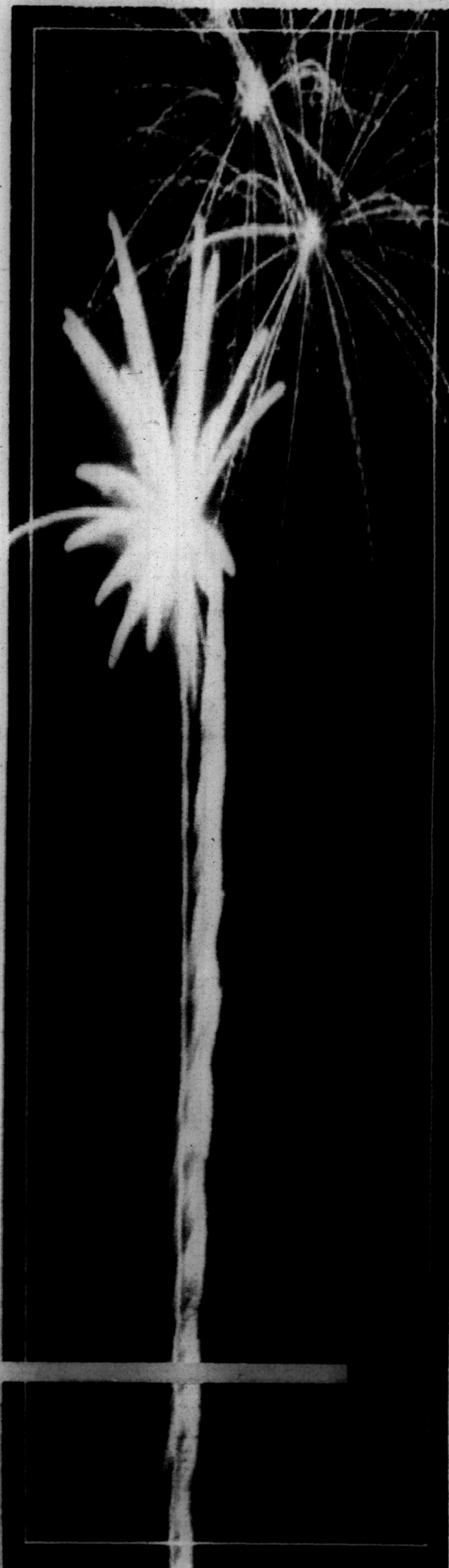
ACCOMMODATIONS DESIRED:

☐ 2 per room ☐ 3-4 per room ☐ Efficiency

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AND SENIOR ADULT CONFERENCES*



*Return this form or any request for Gulfshore information to:
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Frank Simmons, Manager
1100 First Street
P.O. Box 1100, WIS 39571-3299
For MasterCard or Visa registrations by phone: 228-452-7261*



Pray this day for...

January 11-24, 2002

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

PRAYING FOR WISDOM:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

James 1:5

For: (1) Deacon Emphasis Week (CAPM); (2) A Brazilian Baptist chaplain in seafarer's ministries asks for prayer as they seek to reach the prostitutes who are angered when sailors become involved in the port ministries, accept Christ and start to live moral lives.

For: (1) Sanctity of Human Life Sunday (CAC Emphasis); (2) Pray for the Holy Spirit to overcome the intense anti-Christian indoctrination received by the People's Liberation Army soldiers stationed in Shandong, China.

David Carrera is a field missionary assistant and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hispanic Ministries in Shelbyville, Tenn. Pray for a Hispanic Christian radio station for Bedford County. Pray for a counseling office for drug and alcohol abuse programs.

For: (1) Bi-vocational Ministers/Ministers' Wives Banquet (CAPM); (2) Homebound/First Contact Tour, Temple BC, Hattiesburg (SS); (3) State Evangelism Conference (Evan).

For: (1) FAITH Training, Colonial Heights BC, Jackson, 15th - 17th (SS); (2) Several French believers have been invited to participate in cell group leadership training. Pray for these believers as they are now praying about and considering their possible role in this ministry.

For: (1) Homebound First Contact Tour; FBC, Biloxi (SS); (2) Missionaries serving in Luanda, Angola, ask you to pray that permission will be granted for the mission facility to be hooked up to the city water system.

Pray for M., a woman who attends a weekly Bible study in Buenos Aires, Argentina. M. brings her family Bible, edged in gold, which had never been read. Studying the Bible has opened up a new vision for this lady.

For: (1) 2003 Budget Planning Meeting (APS); (2) Several pastors are considering leaving their current churches in Burkina Faso to start new churches in villages where there is no evangelical witness. Pray with them as they seek God's will.

Pray for the lives that were touched by a recent prayer-walking team in Arusha, Tanzania. The team prayed for people who are merchants and adherents of another major world religion. Pray that God will reveal Himself to them.

For: (1) Area Keyboard Festival, Calvary BC, Tupelo; Fairview BC, Columbus; FBC, Clinton; FBC, McComb; FBC, Hattiesburg; FBC, Laurel (CM); (2) Pray today for President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

For: (1) Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra Retreat, Madison, 11th and 12th (CM); (2) Muslim Jihad warriors have again begun violent persecution in Indonesia. Christians are dying, homes and churches are being burned, and horrible atrocities are being committed. Pray for these believers.

A medical/dental team is scheduled to work in Urubicha, Bolivia, South America, in January. Pray for those who have committed to participate that God will grant them good health and a spiritual vitality that will be needed on the trip. Pray for the Guarayos who will attend the clinic.

The majority of the leaders of Venezuela, the largest oil supplier to the USA, are spiritually lost. Please pray for the evangelization of the 850,000 university students and 150,000 faculty and administrators located on 325 campuses scattered all over Venezuela.

There are only 120 known believers in a particular unreached people group of 2.5 million people in northwestern India. Only one expatriate Christian family is laboring among this Hindu group. Pray for God to call a multitude of committed church planters.

FOUR EVENTS FOR PASTOR-STAFF AND CHURCH LEADER TRAINING

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION-PASTORAL MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT



CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCES

January 31, 2002, at First Baptist Church, Madison
"Legal Issues: Church Law, Liabilities, and Insurance"

February 1, 2002, at Adaton Baptist Church, Starkville
"Legal Issues: Church Law, Liabilities, and Insurance"

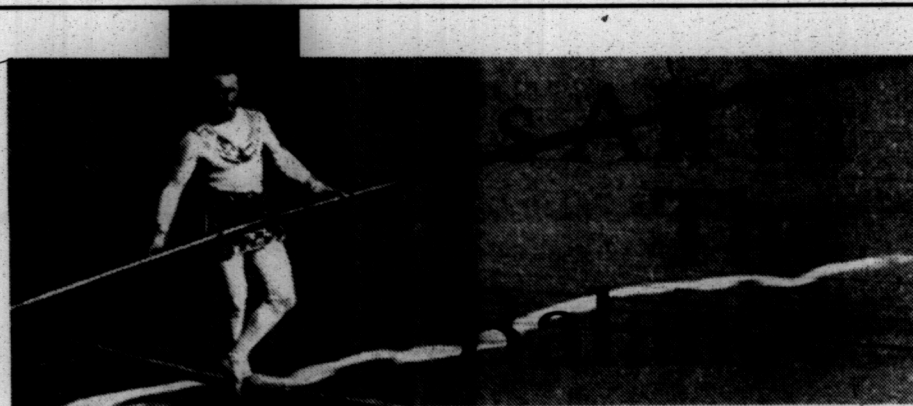
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ONE-DAY PASTOR & STAFF WORKSHOPS

February 11, 2002, at First Baptist Church, Richland
"Challenges in Worship, Evangelism and Church Leadership to Reach Post-Moderns with the Gospel of Jesus Christ"

February 12, 2002, at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada
"Keeping Your Heart for God and Ministry"

For more info, call the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305.



Sunday School Growth Spiral Conference

Parkway Baptist Church, Clinton
February 26, 2002 • 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Conference Leader
David Apple

David is Sunday School FAITH/ministry specialist in Sunday School and Open Groups of LifeWay Church Resources, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention

Any church preregistering prior to February 18 will receive a 10-year history of the church and a Growth Spiral diskette.

Sponsored by
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Sunday School Department
 For more info, call 1-800-748-1651 or (601) 968-3800

HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Betty Butler was honored on June 24 with a special service at Salem Heights Church, Laurel. During the service, D. J. Benson, pastor, presented her a plaque recognizing her dedication to serving in various duties. Larry Goff, state Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, area 8, also presented her a plaque for her more than 50 years of service. Butler served as director of the youth department and other areas connected with youth and prayer ministry. She also served as children and youth Bible drill leader and was the first Jones County National Day of Prayer chairman. Pictured (from left) are Benson, Butler, Goff, and Maurice Flowers, now retired from Jones Association.

Dixie Lee Stringer was honored on Oct. 14 for 27 years of service as church treasurer at North Columbia Church, Columbia. The church presented Stringer with a plaque and a gift certificate during the morning service. A reception was held for her following the evening service. Pictured (from left) are Jerry "Buck" Pittman, chairman of deacons; Stringer; and Mike Grenn, pastor.

Ron Hamilton of Hattiesburg is available for music, pulpit supply, or interim. He can be reached at (601) 498-1936 or by calling him at the Lamar Christian School in Purvis, (601) 794-0016, where he is employed.



Pittman, Stringer, and Grenn



Praet and the Arinders

Lorena Church, Smith Association, recently recognized

Clifton Arinder for three years perfect attendance and Beulah Mae Arinder for her first year pin. Pictured (from left) are Jim Praet, Sunday School director; C. Arinder; and B. Arinder.

George Stockman was ordained as deacon at Enon Church, Bay Springs, on Nov. 25. Pictured (from left) are Cliff Padget; Sammy Stockman, son of George Stockman; A. R. Windham, pastor; and Hueston Adkins, director of missions.



Padget, S. Stockman, G. Stockman, Windham, and Adkins

Billy Ray Smith dies at age 57

Retired pastor Billy Ray Smith, 57, of Smith County, died Dec. 13 at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson. Services were held Dec. 15 at Sardis Church, Morton. Burial was in the church cemetery in Smith County.

His first pastorate was at Zion Church, Polkville. He then pastored churches at Clear Springs, Louin, Willow Bayou, Tallulah, La.; Mount Pleasant, Sylvaena; Sardis, Sardis; Burns, Burns; Mount Carmel, Pineville; Jupiter, Mendenhall; and New Home, Bay Springs; where he recently retired after a total of 38 years of ministry.

Smith also retired as a teacher at Smith County Vocational Complex.

Survivors include his wife of 38 years, Jeanette Kennedy Smith of Smith County; sons, Todd Smith, Anthony Smith, and Mark Smith, all of Sardis community in Smith County; grandchildren, Tyler, Zachary, and Cameron Smith of Sardis community; mother, Myrtle Williamson of Magee; brother, Robert D. Williamson of Forest; and sisters, Sylvia Howard and Linda Williamson, both of California.

Register today for Southwestern's 50th annual Church Music Workshop

Feb. 11-15, 2002

Featuring: 6 hours of choral technics, 6 hours of choral music reading, and 3 concerts



Bryce Corley, professor of New Testament: "Ten Thousand Times—Voices in Praise in the Bible Finale"



Gordon Borror, professor of church music: "The Priestly Ministry of Church Musicians"



John Dickson, director of choral studies, chair of the conducting division, Texas Tech University: choral clinician

Caia Kent McCullar: children's choirs
Cynthia Dobrinski: handbell choirs
Joseph Martin: multi-publisher reading sessions
Allen Pote: multi-publisher reading sessions

Distinguished Service Awards luncheon to honor:
Luther Burney, Glen Boyd, and Hildegard Stanley

Registration: \$105, includes two luncheons and anthem packets.
For more information, call 817-923-1921, ext. 3160 or e-mail scmusic@swbts.edu.



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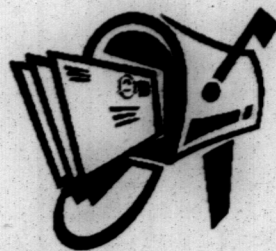
Brandon, MS 39047

call toll-free:

1-800-880-2305

Agents needed.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

SNOW AND GRACE

Editor:

Snow, like grace, is not often seen in south Mississippi and yet tonight, for a few short hours, snow fell — not just a few flakes, but it was measurable in inches.

Snow? Grace? On this New Year's Day 2002, I'm surer than ever of God's never-ending supply of love and grace for us. I'm also sadly aware that there is still a lot of condemnation associated with God by well-meaning people who overlook the fact that "God did not send his Son to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Good news! Hope for all in this new year! God is for us! So as I take a few last mental pictures of the snow before I sleep, still coming down so steadily and quietly, I am at peace. It is as if the snow covering my lawn, sidewalk, and the street below is a visual reminder of how God covers us with his love. All the past heartaches,

disappointments, struggles, problems, and depression are buried beneath the pure, white snow.

When the snow melts and is only a memory or a photograph, there will be other reminders — daily visitations — that God's mercies are so fresh and new every day.

Where sin increased, grace increased even more. In south Mississippi on New Year's Day, snow fell and it was really deep.

Patty Upton
Hattiesburg

AMEN TO GUEST OPINION

Editor:

Recently, I read the Guest Opinion: "Is your church dying?" by Archie Herrin in the November 1 edition of The Baptist Record and am compelled to respond with an "Amen!" and an "Oh me!" — an "Amen!" to what he said as it was well written, biblically sound, and experientially

familiar and an "Oh me!" because the main reason churches are dying was not addressed.

Other than our sin nature (the believer's enemy #1), the main reason (not the only reason) many of our Southern Baptist churches are dying, or at best holding their own (doesn't a flat line mean death?) and attempting to maintain the status quo (as I see it, the status isn't a lot to quo about!) is because of the foundation upon which those churches are built.

No wonder so many churches are dying when "babes in Christ" (new believers) and "carnal" believers have the same "vote" about the ministry and direction of the church as does the Lord through his called, church pastor/pastors.

It is apparent that many of our Southern Baptist churches have become nothing more than bonded corporations (board of directors - deacons; CEO - the pastor; stockholders - members; employees -

the staff), not blood-bought congregations; organizations given legitimacy by a government on Capitol Hill, not organisms given life by God on Calvary's hill; funded foundations, not families of faith; powerful lobbies, not penetrating lights.

Brethren, we Baptists proudly call ourselves "People of the Book." As such, it is high time we Baptist reaffirm our commitment to the foundation (Ephesians 2:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:19), who is the Rock (Matthew 16:18), the Word (John 1:1), and lead our people to obey the Lord (Luke 6:46; John 2:5) by honoring the framework (Ephesians 2:21) God has ordained for our churches (Acts 15:23) and homes (Colossians 3:18-20)!

Revelation 3:22: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Alan B. Celoria, pastor
Wray Church
Wray, CO

Make the Memories Last

A photo captures a moment in time.
A will breathes life into each one. How?

By preparing a will, you remember the most cherished people in your life ... family, friends and those you have prayed would hear the name of Jesus even for the first time.

Consider designating the International Mission Board as a beneficiary. By doing so, you can continue to share the gospel around the world and build on the memories of your lifetime.

To find out more about preparing a will or updating the one you have, contact us at either office:



THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

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www.mbcf.org



International
Mission Board
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Development Department
1-800-362-1322
e-mail: development@imb.org
www.imb.org/development



The International Mission Board is a Southern Baptist Convention entity supported by the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Mission Friends of Strong Hope Church, Wesson



RAs of Strong Hope Church, Wesson

Strong Hope Church, Wesson, recently held its annual WMU recognition service. Mission Friends pictured (from left, first row) are Morgan Acy; Blake Runyan; Madelyn Beasley; Meagan Berch; Brianna Savage; Noah Martin; (second row) Lauren Acy; Tina Acy, leader; Wes Beasley; Brandon Runyan; Dolan Crowe; Jessa Martin; Lesa Williams, leader; Kim Runyan, leader; and Bryce Runyan.

RAs pictured (first row, from left) are John Ryan; Dylan Berch; (second row) Adam Williams; Ben Nead; Aaron Cagle; Michael Middleton; and Sue Bowlin, leader.

Younger GAs pictured (from left) are Karen Middleton, leader; Georgia Bowlin; Katilyn Savage; Rachel Crowe; Kristina Bates; Jessica Jackson; and Katie Magee.

Older GAs pictured (from left) are Dawn Savage, leader; Kelli Ryan; Corey Bates; Ashlee Mullins, leader; and Pam Moore.

Acteens pictured (from left)



Younger GAs of Strong Hope Church, Wesson

are Janie Jackson, leader; Amanda Jackson; Mandi Elkins; Heather Morgan Smith; Maggie Morgan; and Evelyn King, WMU director.

Youth on Mission (front row)

are Bradley Middleton; Benton Bell; Crystal Ryan; Clay Bowlin; (second row) Harvey Laud, leader; Brent Holly; Earl Bell; Blake Williams; Scott Mullins; Heather Laird, leader.



Acteens of Strong Hope Church, Wesson



Older GAs of Strong Hope Church, Wesson



Youth on Mission of Strong Hope Church, Wesson

Lorena Church, Smith Association recently held a GA recognition service. Pictured (from left) are Helen Faulkner; Emily Forfer; Stacy Henderson, leader; Sharon Taylor; Carrie Harrison; Ivory Weldon; and Nicole Faulkner.



GAs of Lorena Church, Smith Association

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 in Sunday School seeks full-time associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180; or fax to (601) 636-7574.

DANIEL MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH, Jackson, Miss., is seeking a part-time financial secretary. For further information, please call the church office at (601) 376-4100.

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON, is seeking a minister of music. The church is located on Highway 43 South between Pelahatchie and Puckett. Please submit resume to: Antioch Baptist Church, 2350 Highway 43 South, Brandon, MS 39042.

KEMPER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is seeking a part-time associational missions director (AMD). Send resume to Gwen at P.O. Box 36, DeKalb, MS 39328. Job description and salary package furnished upon request. (601) 743-4524.

SEBASTOPOL BAPTIST CHURCH, Sebastopol, is seeking a full-time youth minister. Send resume to Youth Minister Search Committee, Sebastopol Baptist Church, P.O. Box 163, Sebastopol, MS 39359; or call (601) 625-8355.

CLASSIFIED ADS

RATE: 60 cents per word, minimum of ten words; maximum of fifty words. Cash with order except on contract advertising. Include name, address, zip code, and phone number in word count. No blind ads. **ONLY WRITTEN ADS ACCEPTED.**

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CLIFTON BAPTIST CHURCH is taking bids on used church pews. 22 — 12 ft. pews; 5 — 9 ft. 10 in. pews; natural oak, blue padding, good condition. One pulpit that is natural oak, good condition. Call after 5 p.m. (601) 625-7220 or mail bids to Clifton Baptist Church, ATTN: Joe Bell, 634 Tadpole Road, Forest, MS 39074-8295.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs of First Church, Columbus



RAs of First Church, Columbus

Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse, collects and sends shoeboxes filled with toys to children in poverty-stricken areas around the world. The GAs and RAs of First Church, Columbus, focused on collecting items to fill their decorated shoeboxes as a part of their outreach to other children at Christmas. First Church served as a relay center for Samaritan's Purse in the Columbus area and surrounding counties. Approximately 3,000 shoeboxes were collected. GAs pictured (from left) are Kristen Harvey, Chloe Jordan, Kendyl Hall, Karen Hall (teacher), Sophie Perkins, and Ashley McCall. RAs pictured (from left) are Garrett Hall, Walker Hosley, and Stance Henderson.



Hillcrest Church, Jackson, held a ground-breaking ceremony on Nov. 18. The church's new facility will be located at 5950 Terry Road in Byram.

Calvary Chapel, a Southern Baptist mission at Parchman, serving the staff of the state penitentiary and surrounding community, sent their pastor, Joe Young, to Mexico in 1993 to explore the possibilities of a mission trip in the future. The church has just completed its ninth annual Mexico trip, and has done a total of 13 trips to the northeastern state of Tamaulipas, south of Brownsville, Texas. Though the church has fewer than 50 members, it has taken 503 persons to Mexico for a week or more doing 21 construction projects, conducting 32 medical-dental-eye-evangelism clinics treating 1,344 patients, two evangelistic



GAs of Damascus Church, Flora

Damascus Church, Flora, recently held its annual Senior Citizens Tea Party sponsored by the GAs (pictured above) and their leaders, Renee Gentry and Tami Alford. This event began three years ago when the GAs decided to reach out to the senior citizens in their church and community. The idea came from a mission study of England and Great Britain. Junior and Martha Whitehead (pictured below) were selected as this year's king and queen.



Members of Calvary Chapel, Parchman

campaigns, and 56 Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) enrolling over 3,000 pupils. One Mexican-American, Tino Trevino of Batesville, felt called to preach as a result of his participation and serves two missions. Calvary Chapel has also sponsored three English-speaking missions in North Mississippi over the past eight years. The 2001 Mexico team conducted six Vacation Bible Schools and led four medical clinics in which 170 patients were treated, 15 of who made professions of faith. Members of Calvary Chapel pictured (from left) are Ronnie Lusher, Leon Kennedy, Jim Harmon, Joey Young, Earl Hodges, Jay Moore, and Felix McElhanney.

The Dan and Jane Robertson RA chapter of Calvary Church, Greenville,

recently held a soup and cornbread supper and raised \$349 for the World Hunger Mission Project. The RAs have also been collecting cans for the Pastor Suit Project. James H. Kerr is director.



RAs of Calvary Church, Greenville



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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Enemy to advocate

Acts 9:1-16

By J. Michael Barnett

He often stared at his family from across the table refusing to let anyone pray and said, "I am the one who worked hard to provide this meal. If you thank anybody for it, thank me."

He was a hard man. We prayed and prayed for his salvation. He came to church when his grandchildren sang.

On a particular Sunday night his granddaughter sang and I preached. His wife came down during the invitation and in tears called upon the name of the Lord.

As I was presenting her to the church, he stepped out into the aisle and said, "Wait a

minute." I did not know what was going to happen. The church resounded with, "Amen's" and "Hallelujahs" after he said, "I need Jesus too."

After that night this man became a faithful member of the church. He prayed publicly with a childlike humility and faith. The Lord had transformed his life.

The experience of salvation is the same for everyone. While situations may be different, all testimonies are basically the same. A sinner encounters the Savior and the Savior makes him a saint. This is what happened to the gentleman I just described and it is what



Barnett

happened to Saul in Acts 9:10-16.

Notice Saul the sinner in verses 1-2. These verses are a continuation of the stoning of Stephen in chapter 8 verses 1-3. Saul stands as one bitterly opposed to the church. He not only threatens the peace of the church but the Bible says that he

also committed murder.

He was a fanatic; he went the extra mile and acquired authority to go to Damascus to wreak havoc among the disciples of Jesus. Regardless of the manifestation of one's sinfulness, the sinner stands at enmity against God (see Rom. 8:7). This is one of the great tragedies of remaining in sin.

It is when we are sinners that Christ encounters us first (see Rom. 5:8). Saul was not trying to clean himself up. He was not trying to "turn over a new leaf." He was going to perse-

cute the church with a furious determination. This is when Jesus intersected his life. The encounter is common to all sinners who meet the Savior.

First it was an unmistakable encounter (v. 3-6). A blinding light and a booming voice assured Paul that the God of heaven had knocked him off his high horse. It was also a confrontational encounter (v. 4). Jesus said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

The Savior took Saul's persecution of the church personally. He confronted his hatred. It is a good lesson to people who criticize the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He takes it personally and will one day confront the abuser.

Saul also found the encounter to be instructional (v. 8-9). Saul readily obeyed the Word of Christ realizing that it was difficult to resist such an encounter with the risen Jesus. It was difficult to "kick against the goads."

Saul also found his encounter with Jesus to be one of grace. It was this encounter that made him a saint. Every person who has encountered the risen Savior by grace through faith is a saint. The word means "a holy one." It is God's designation of one who has been separated by him for salvation and service.

The Savior encountered the sinner and made him a saint. Verse 15 indicates Saul's separation, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he (Saul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

The word "chosen" is the word that references God's elect. Saul was chosen by grace to be a saint. The Lord Jesus is in the business of encountering the lives of people so that they will be transformed from sinners into saints.

Barnett is pastor of First Church, Ocean Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Beware of pride

Deuteronomy 9:1-6; 10:12-16

By Carleen McGraw

Do you have a problem with pride? Are you inclined to dwell on "I" when speaking of your blessings and accomplishments?

Moses has a tremendous message for all of us who might find ourselves stuck in the "I" syndrome. Moses had lived with the Israelites, and put up with their egos for 40 years.

As he comes to the end of his leadership role with them, he warns, reminds, pleads, and begs them to understand that it is the Lord who has been, is now, and will continue to be in control.

The Lord has given them laws, written out by the finger of God, and they are to live and be governed by these laws, or they will fail in their mission.

In Deuteronomy 9:1-6, Moses tells the people they are about to go in to dispossess nations that are greater and stronger than they; their cities have sky-high walls, the people are strong and tall and have a reputation of being impossible to conquer.

Then he assures them they have nothing to worry about: "...the Lord your God is the One who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you" (v. 3).

Anticipating the time after the Lord had given them the land and they had settled in, Moses issues this warning: Don't get the idea that God has done this for you because you are a righteous, God-loving, God-fearing people, but on



McGraw

account of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God will drive them out before you to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 5).

As if for good measure and to be certain the Israelites understood what God was saying, Moses repeats that it is

not because of your righteousness "...for you are a stiff-necked people" (v. 6). In allowing the Israelites to take the land, God was acting in divine judgement and in his wrath against the wickedness of the Canaanites.

Then so that the people might not begin to think, "Oh, we were not so bad — everybody makes a mistake now and then," Moses suggests they think back over some of their sins.

From the time they left Egypt until they arrived at the point of entering the Promised Land, they had been an arrogant and rebellious people. He

reminded them of the time he had gone up on the mountain to receive the commandments and decrees from the hand of the Lord, and they had become impatient because of his absence.

They had brought their gold to Aaron and he had built them a golden calf to worship. When Moses came down from the mountain with the stones on which God had written the Ten Commandments and found God's people worshipping a golden calf, in his anger he had thrown down the tablets and broken them.

He reminded them that on that occasion God's anger was so intense, he would have destroyed all the people except for Moses' intervention on their behalf. (You will find it interesting to read about this event in Exodus 32-34.)

He reminded the people of other occasions when they had angered the Lord (vv. 22, 23). Moses knew how God hated sin, especially the sin of his chosen people, but he also knew that God was merciful, and it

was in his mercy that the people were spared time and time again.

In 10:12-13 Moses says, "And now, O Israel, what does the Lord ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?"

The Lord had given them freedom from slavery, shown his love for them by feeding, clothing, teaching, leading, and preparing them to take the land flowing with milk and honey that he had promised their forefathers.

In return, God wanted an awesome fear of the Lord, respect for his power that had been demonstrated, to walk in his way, to love him, to serve him, and to share his love with others. Is that so much to ask? That is all he wants from his people today.

McGraw is a member of First Church, Louisville.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

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Mosque plans rattling nerves in Nazareth

NAZARETH, Israel (BP) — A simmering controversy over the construction of a mosque next to the largest church in the Middle East is threatening to



NAZARETH HOT SPOT—Controversy is simmering in Nazareth, Israel, where a militant Muslim group is forging ahead with construction of a mosque near the Basilica of the Annunciation (above). (BP photo)

the trustee of the White Mosque, the oldest mosque in town.

The 250-year-old structure is about a block away from the Basilica of the Annunciation, where tradition says the angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to the baby Jesus.

Sitting in his son's coffee shop, where the aroma of freshly ground coffee tantalized a handful of reporters on a pre-Christmas tour of Nazareth, Al Fahoum said he had gathered his courage to speak out as a resident of Nazareth for the good of the city.

Such courage runs in his family. Al Fahoum's father was the mayor of Nazareth in 1948 when Israel became a nation. He prevented locals from fleeing advancing Israeli troops and therefore prevented them from becoming refugees.

Al Fahoum boasts that his father, and not Egyptian President Anwar Sadat 30 years later, was the first Arab leader in the region to recognize the United Nations partition plan that created the state of Israel and to sign a treaty with the fledgling state.

Historically, there has been no struggle between the Christian and Muslim communities of Nazareth, Al Fahoum said—but now things may be changing.

"The construction of the mosque is close to the church. The border of the church is exactly on the edge," he said.

"This has nothing to do with religion at all," Al Fahoum said. It has to do with building an idea, and therefore the extrem-

ists want to turn the area into a religious place, he said.

The controversy erupted four years ago after the city announced plans to build a piazza for tourists in the city center near the Basilica of the Annunciation and tore down a small, unused Muslim school.

The Islamic Movement put up a giant tent mosque in protest and claimed it had a right to build a mosque there and that a great Islamic sage was buried nearby.

The controversy kicked into high gear three years ago when Christians in the town were physically attacked on Christmas and the following Easter by extremists who threw rocks at them as they were leaving the church.

The government stepped in to offer a compromise plan two years ago, which included dividing the area to provide for a mosque, a small plaza, and police station.

Church officials, as high up as the Vatican, and moderate Muslims in the town were not happy about the compromise and have called on the state to return to the original building plan.

"All the Muslims of the Muslim world could not build a mosque here if Israel doesn't let them," Al Fahoum said. "Israel wants to be an oasis of democracy in the Middle East [to be able to say] even if you Muslims want to build a mosque next to a church, you can."

He said the city already has 11 mosques and that is enough.

Some 30% of Nazareth's population is Christian, while 70% is Muslim. It was not clear how many of those are turning to the radical Islamic Movement, but he said the number is "growing."

"We are not encouraging Christians or Muslims here. We are asking the state, 'Let us live in peace,'" Al Fahoum said.

"We don't know who is behind it, but the state of Israel as a government can stop any kind of violence," said Joe Fahoum, Al Fahoum's brother.

For Israel the situation is very sensitive, observers say. If Israel permits the building of the mosque, the entire Christian world, including the Vatican, will be angry about it. If Israel forbids it, the radical Islamic world could do much worse.

The 2,000-square-meter triangular plot of land sits in the center of the city, where a side street branches off the very narrow main street toward the Basilica of the Annunciation.

Atallah Mansour, a journalist and local Christian, said it is Israel's fault that this problem developed. He downplayed any conspiracy theory and blamed the trouble on the fact that the Muslims have no Muslim institutions in Nazareth.

"It's not a Muslim conspiracy [or that] they want to dominate us," Mansour said. "No, they don't. They want to burst out of their cage. When there were 10 or 11 mosques built in Nazareth from 1967 to 2000 no one ever opened his mouth."

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YSVUTE OUR:

LQTVLN-LQG

Clue: E = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Genesis Six: Twelve.

CenturyMen perform at sites of terrorist attacks

NEW YORK (BP) — A hundred men in tuxedos likely would turn a few heads in most towns, but not in New York City.

The CenturyMen, a 100-voice, all-male choir of Southern Baptists, used buses, trains, and subways to maneuver through the city. The natty men hardly drew a casual glance from New Yorkers.

"Only in New York could 96 men in tuxes move around and not get noticed," said one of those men, Lee Hinson, assistant professor of church music for Midwestern Seminary.

The tour might not have happened, if not for the determination of the men in the choir. Scheduled for October 1-9, the tour was to include stops in New York City, Washington, Baltimore, Richmond, and Williamsburg, Va.

It had been in the planning stage for two years and CenturyMen president Paul Clark said that in the wake of the Sept. 11 attack, the men expressed commitment instead of fear.

"Initially, I had questioned whether the guys would go, flying in from all over the country, but it was a momentary lapse of faith," said Clark, worship and music specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

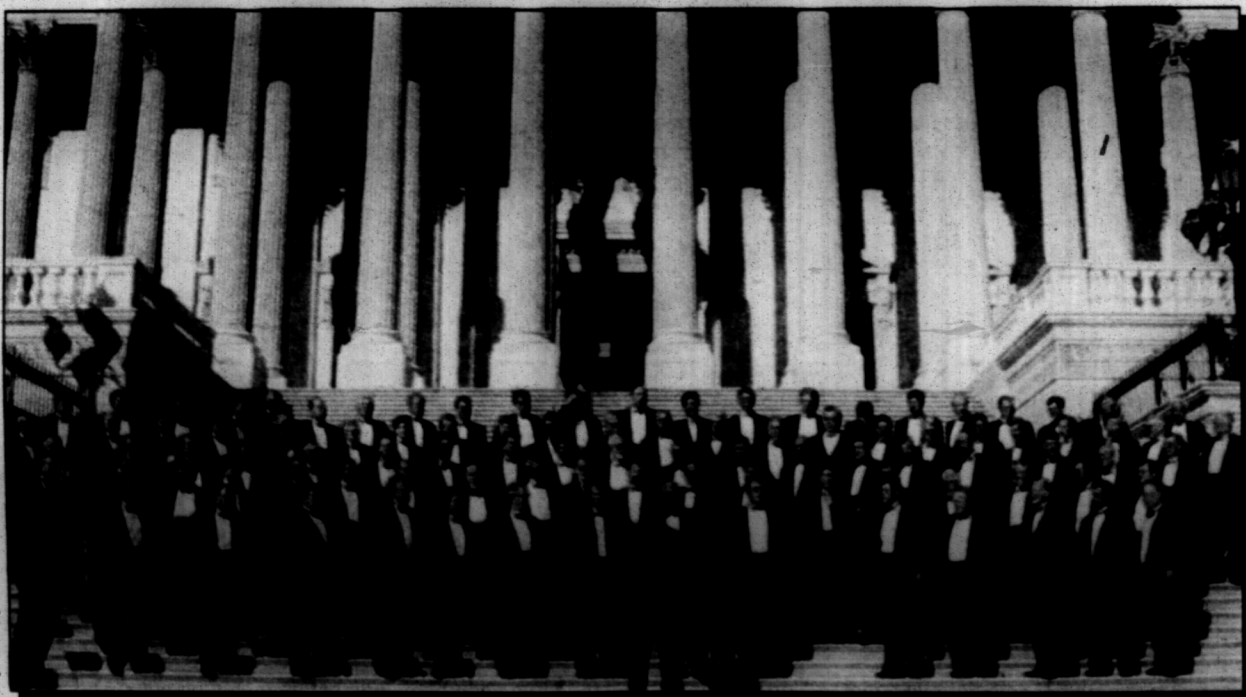
"Instead, there was a stronger determination than ever to go there and declare the gospel in song. The timing, indeed, was providential," he said.

Hinson agreed, saying the timing couldn't have been better for singing the Gospel message.

Hinson pointed out that the CenturyMen often sing in places Southern Baptists don't normally go. For example, the group sang in an off-Broadway Gospel show and a couple of minutes on the CBS television network's Early Show.

"I believe the audience of the off-

Broadway show sensed that it wasn't just music to us — it was the Gospel," Hinson said. "We weren't just singing about a sentiment, we were singing something we believed." The CenturyMen is an audition-only male choir made up mostly of Southern Baptist music ministers.



CENTURYMEN ON TOUR — The CenturyMen sing on the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C., in early October. This was the first CenturyMen tour for Lee Hinson, assistant professor of church music at Midwestern Seminary. He said singing on the Capitol steps "was moving to me because I realized that had that fourth plane not gone down in Pennsylvania, that the building behind me flying the American flag might not have been there." (BP photo by Paul Clark)